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Pennsylvania  
Public Television

*The People's Business*

Report of the Policy and Planning Committee  
Pennsylvania Public Television Network Commission  
April 1974



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Public Television

# The People's Business

This report explores what Pennsylvanians want to watch on public television. Under the guidance of Dr. John Hershey and several other distinguished Pennsylvania citizens, the Pennsylvania Public Television Network Commission and its seven member stations launched a study to determine what Pennsylvanians really wanted public television to do.

Nearly 500 personal in-depth interviews were conducted with community leaders across the state; 143 citizens took their time to testify at televised open public hearings held at the seven local stations; and most impressively

5,700 Pennsylvanians felt strongly enough about public television to respond to a newspaper questionnaire which asked them what programs they would like to see on public television. The state-wide ascertainment project has been completed and it forms the basis for a 600 page report on the state of public television in Pennsylvania. This brief version highlights the findings of that report. The needs have been identified — program initiatives developed. The People's Business — Pennsylvania Public Television went to the people to ask them what *they* wanted. PPTN accepts the challenge. This report shows how the challenge can be met!

The Committee recommends that the Pennsylvania Public Television Network Commission:

- 1. Accept the needs expressed by the people of Pennsylvania in this report as the basic goals of the Pennsylvania Public Television Network**
- 2. Provide programming designed to meet those needs**
- 3. Maintain and strengthen the present high level of network service to the citizens of Pennsylvania by PPTN**
- 4. Seek the funds to increase program services to meet the needs that have been identified**

# The first twenty years

Public/educational television started in Pennsylvania when the first community owned station in the world, WQED in Pittsburgh, went on the air 20 years ago. Additional stations were launched, aided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, until state-wide coverage was completed with the seventh station six years ago.

In 1967, the Governor appointed a committee on public television in Pennsylvania. It recommended the creation of the Pennsylvania Public Television Network Commission.

In November, 1968, the General Assembly passed and the Governor signed a bill which created the Commission to help

strengthen local public television stations, to develop a network system and to provide for improved programming on a state-wide basis.

Five years ago, in 1969, the Pennsylvania Public Television Network was established to link the stations together and to provide the capability for extensive state-wide public television.

For many years the emphasis was necessarily on establishing the system and on providing the hardware and basic support for its operation. Programming also began as a local responsibility, with each station producing what it broadcast.

# **The present: an electronic highway, seven fine vehicles — but little cargo**

Throughout the first five years of PPTN, the emphasis was on the establishment of the state-wide network. Successful programming experiments have proceeded on a minimal basis.

Nevertheless, millions of Pennsylvanians tune in our public television stations to view a variety of programs. Audience surveys indicate that over one-third (4 1/2 million) of our state's population regularly view public television. Over a million students are served by instructional programs on Pennsylvania Public Television.

Today in Pennsylvania, public television is in a position to reach a new plateau. The system is in place and functioning. The highway and transmission vehicles are in place, the clear need is for consequential program cargo! The present level of funding is merely adequate to provide one state funded program a week. With a relatively small additional investment, the system can realize its promise and potential.

## ***RECOMMENDATION ONE***

*It is recommended that the PPTN Commission accept the needs as identified in this report to provide the basic goals for public television programming in Pennsylvania during the coming months and years.*

## **The People Identify Eight Top Needs**

- 1. A Forum for Public Debate**
- 2. A Forum for the Lively Arts**
- 3. To Serve Young People and Their World**
- 4. To Know How the System Works**
- 5. To Receive Health Care Information**
- 6. Adult Education, for Credit or Fun**
- 7. To Know and Understand Pennsylvania's Many Faces**
- 8. To Hear Public Officials Speak and the Opposition Respond**

## ***RECOMMENDATION TWO***

*It is recommended that the PPTN Commission increase statewide programming on the network with programs designed to meet specific public needs as determined in the ascertainment project.*

# 1.

## The Need: A Forum for Public Debate

The highest priority identified by the public is the need for spirited debate on contemporary issues by advocates of various positions — and they want their community leaders to take an active part in the discussions.

One interview summed it up: “Public television needs programs to inform the public on issues which will directly affect them, such as passage of a new law and what it means. Use knowledgeable advocates with various points of view about a given problem, bill, document.”

## PPTN Response:

“Utilizing citizen participation, PPTNC feels the need can be met by:

*A Pennsylvania Town Meeting* where experts and officials join citizens in a monthly state-wide town meeting for a discussion of major issues!

*Face the People* where the press and the public question prominent leaders on this series.

# 2. The Need: A Forum for the Lively Arts

Drama, music, the visual arts captured the attention of many of the people who spoke to PPTN. There is little doubt that our cultural resources deserve more attention. Pennsylvanians would like to see PPTN give the lively arts the opportunity for regular exposure.

## PPTN Response:

There are many different types of programs which can increase the understanding and appreciation of the rich artistic resources of the Commonwealth.

*Pennsylvania Performance* can feature outstanding dramatic and musical performances focusing on the great wealth of professionally talented groups and individuals of the Commonwealth.

*The Arts in Pennsylvania* — a series to examine the state of the arts in Pennsylvania — their origins, present resources, problems and future hopes.

# 3.

## The Need: To Serve Young People and Their World

Public television has a lengthy list of accomplishments in children's programming, especially for pre-schoolers and children ages 12 and under. But the teenager remains unserved and it is important that program opportunities and services be developed for this important segment of our population.

Young people have many of the same interests as their parents, but the intensity of interest may vary. Public television should develop ways to determine unique needs of young people and serve them.

## PPTN Response:

*Interface:* A program to serve the unique needs of young people featuring their participation and accomplishments.

*High School Sports* have always been a most popular program service on public television. Coverage of championship events in all sports should be broadcast on a regular basis.

# The Need: **4.** To Know How the System Works

The people's relationship with their government is a cause for concern by over two-thirds of the citizens who responded to PPTN. People want to know how their government works, what it's doing to alleviate current pressing problems, and how they can participate on both local and state levels.

## PPTN Response:

PPTN offers for consideration these programs designed to educate and involve citizens in the governmental process!

*Harrisburg Week in Review* — an analysis of major governmental actions of the week — their origins and impacts.

*Hearings and Investigations* — on-the-scene telecasts of legislative and administrative hearings.

*Specials* — to take advantage of late breaking events and needs as they arise during the year.

# 5.

## The Need: To Receive Health Care Information

Recent public television offerings in the area of personal health care and the health care delivery system have stimulated our citizens' interest in finding out just what is available. The quality of health care is of continuing public concern. The citizen clearly recognizes the value of accurate, current information about his health and the health of his community.

People are concerned about their health — and community agencies want people to know services are available to them.

## PPTN Response:

### *Acquisitions*

Many programs and series have been produced on health care. PPTN will investigate the availabilities and acquire the most relevant for Pennsylvania.

### *Health Follow-Up Programs*

Locally oriented programs can be designed to capitalize on the interest generated by major national programs on health problems. "The TurnedOn Crisis," "VD Blues" and "The Killers" have set the pattern in recent years and next year a new major national health series will be available via PBS.

# 6. The Need: Adult Education, for Credit or Fun

Half of the citizens surveyed indicated the need for adult instructional programming. Of course, the local station is the most appropriate institution for meeting these needs, and the respondents clearly reflected this in their answers. It is important, however, that public television approach this need with a cohesive and well organized approach.

## PPTN Response:

Adult education courses include credit education for people who can't get to an institution as well as instruction and information for people's avocational and recreational enjoyment.

### *College Courses*

Series to be produced cooperatively with the Department of Education and the colleges and universities of the Commonwealth can make higher education available wherever people are, for credit and non-credit viewing. The Commission proposes to provide production funding to initiate this service.

### *Pennsylvania Outdoors*

This series about the great recreational resources in the state would be produced in cooperation with various agencies and organizations providing such services in the Commonwealth.

# 7.

## The Need: To Know and Understand Pennsylvania's Many Faces

The role of minorities in our society drew the attention of over half the people we asked. The respondents expressed concern for meeting the particular needs of women, racial minorities and ethnic groups. Any program should include the role of these groups in society, their unique features and information which is most important to them.

## PPTN Response:

Often a single program can speak to many needs:

*Commonwealth Magazine* can be a regular series designed to handle multiple issues within a single program format or a single subject with in-depth analysis such as Black Culture or Women's Rights.

*Pennsylvania Biography* is a dramatic series of historical-biographical programs about the people and their impact on Pennsylvania's development.

*Pennsylvania Bicentennial* is a special program series which would be produced over the next three years. It would be capped with special coverage of all major events in the 1976 celebration.

# 8.

## The Need: To Hear Public Officials Speak and the Opposition Respond

The need for spirited debate on public issues has been articulated in Needs One and Four, yet it is most important that coverage of events where official positions are aired is regularly available. Half the people asked by PPTN thought it was important for public television to present speeches by officials of *all* levels of government. Those surveyed felt it was equally important for public television to provide a response from the “opposition party.”

## PPTN Response:

Any time an official position on a matter of general importance to the people of this state is aired, public television should be there.

Coverage of '*State of the State*' budget messages delivered by the Governor to the General Assembly and similar events require on-the-spot coverage. Responses can generally be included within on-going series, but might be specially scheduled.



### **RECOMMENDATION THREE**

*It is recommended that the PPTN Commission continue to maintain, strengthen and operate the basic public television network system serving Pennsylvania in order to provide the production and distribution capabilities necessary for providing the program services that citizens of the Commonwealth need.*

## **Maintaining the System**

Pennsylvania's public television system calls for strong, locally controlled and operated stations in order to maximize local support, service and accountability.

The PPTN Commission, working with and through the stations provides an opportunity for a strong state-wide service which will be responsive to the needs identified in this study and its purposes defined by law:

**1.** To encourage the growth and development of a dynamic, free and effective public television service by making grants to public television stations serving Pennsylvania to aid in the improvement of their broadcast operations, programming, and capital facilities.

**2.** To develop and operate a network system interconnecting all non-commercial television stations serving Pennsylvania.

**3.** To insure diversity of programming and to allow for freedom, imagination, objectivity and initiative on both the state and local level, including procurement of educational and public television programs for distribution on the network.

The system now exists, but increasing costs require additional funds to maintain it properly.

Modest refinement of the system will be required in order to provide comprehensive service. The addition of radio will provide an economical supplement to the existing state-wide television service.

## ***RECOMMENDATION FOUR***

*It is recommended that the PPTN Commission continue to seek adequate funding from appropriate sources to increase programming services designed to meet Pennsylvania's needs and to maintain the existing public television network system for this purpose*

## **Funding Public Television in Pennsylvania**

There are several common misconceptions about the funding of public television. The first and most common misconception is that the federal government funds PTV for the greatest percentage of its income. In fact, federal monies make up the smallest share of the combined PTV budgets in Pennsylvania. Only 5% of the public television services delivered to the people is a direct result of federal funds granted to the seven stations in Pennsylvania.

The state of Pennsylvania, through the PPTN Commission and the Pennsylvania Department of Education supplies 20% of the financial support for public television in Pennsylvania, but the majority of station support comes from local sources — approx-

imately 75%. It is this strong local support which has enabled the stations to support a competent level of services to their respective communities.

As a matter of policy the PPTN Commission and individual station Boards have always supported the concept of diversified funding sources for public television

*“The Committee stands firm in its conviction that State assistance should be made available to local stations sufficiently small to insure the continued striving for local funds and continued dependence on diversified sources, yet large enough to make local pressure manageable and to develop a firm and permanent financial base.”*

*(p. 63, A Public Television Network for Pennsylvania)*

# Station Support by Source

(Seven Pennsylvania PTV Stations,  
1972-73 Figures)

Total Income of \$7,793,000

Special Projects 19%

Memberships & Contributions 18%

Schools & Colleges 24%

Auctions 14%

Local 75%

State 20%

Federal 5%

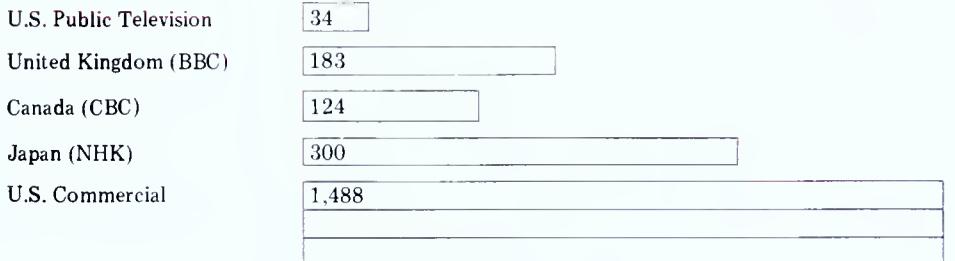
# About National Funding

Neither the Pennsylvania Public Television Network nor the local stations can expect a substantial increase in support from the federal government. Budget appropriations have encountered continuous difficulties each year.

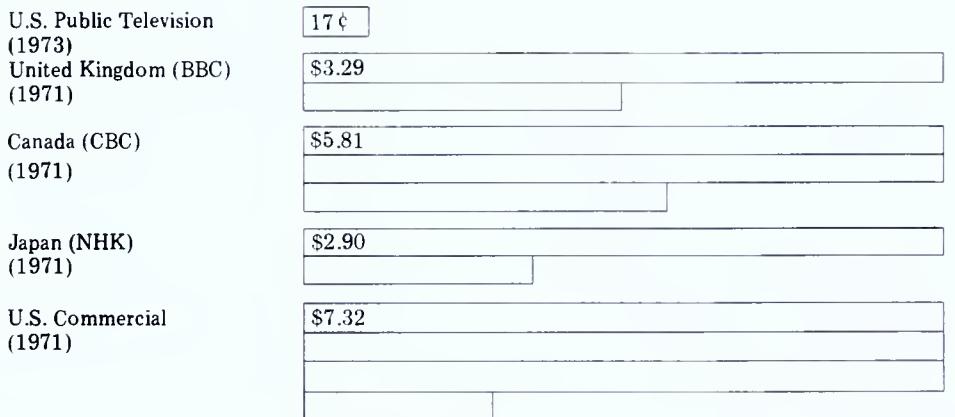
The Long Range Finance Committee for Public Television identified the needs of public television nationally and it provides the unavoidable conclusion that public television in the United States has less support than our counterparts in other countries. United States commercial television has revenues 43 times that of United States public television in network revenue alone. While we expect improvement on the national picture, we must assume that the greatest responsibility for providing our program services will still rest on our state and local resources.

# Comparative national television service costs

## Funding in Millions of American Dollars



## Per Capita Expenditures



## How Does Pennsylvania Compare With Other States

The current level of appropriations granted by comparable

states in support of educational/public television services is far ahead of Pennsylvania both in total dollars and per capita expenditures.

## STATE BUDGETS (1973-74)

Total Dollars (in millions)		Per Capita
3.674	Pennsylvania	31¢
5.696	Ohio	54¢
10.100	Maryland	\$1.54
13.837	South Carolina	\$2.35
9.863	New York	54¢

# Financial considerations in Meeting the Needs

PPTN cannot meet all needs on all levels. It is clearly the responsibility of local stations to provide programming from a number of sources — local, state, regional and national — to meet the needs of the citizens of the local community.

Nevertheless, the present level of programming available to the Pennsylvanians through the resources of PPTN is clearly inadequate. *Slightly over one hour per week of state-wide programming is possible under current funding levels.*

The Commission believes a modest increase to four hours per week is a realistic and appropriate goal for meeting the identified programming needs in the next fiscal year. From nearly 600 hours of programming suggested, the Commission will select approximately 220 hours to develop for network distribution.

# Programming to Meet the Needs

## *Increased Programming Services*

The Policy and Planning Committee recommends an increase in Pennsylvania programming services from 56 hours per year to 220 hours per year. Because public television is most interested in impact and service, it must concentrate on reaching those to be served and aiding quality utilization. This includes printed materials, involving professional organizations and encouraging further citizen participation.

During the past two years, the cost of programs funded by the Commission has averaged just under \$15,000 per hour. In order to increase programming to 220 hours per year, costs in 1974-75 are projected as follows:

Program Production and Acquisition (220 hours at \$15,000 per hour)	\$3,300,000
Program Promotion and Utilization (18% of programming)	\$ 600,000
TOTAL	\$3,900,000

## *Maintenance of Pennsylvania's PTV System*

During the Commission's first five years, many improvements have been made. An interconnected network was developed and now operates some 15 hours a day, 352 days a year, thus expanding the broadcast schedules of all stations. Color programming has been greatly increased on public television and broadcast facilities have been improved.

To maintain and strengthen the PPTN system the Committee projects a cost of \$4.1 million in the 1974-75 fiscal year. The breakdown here indicates distribution and use of these funds.

Station Support	\$2,217,000
Operations	1,110,000
Maintenance	280,000
Equipment	739,000
Training	88,000
Network Operations	\$1,883,000
Equipment	394,000
Facilities	868,000
Operations and Maintenance	621,000
TOTAL	\$4,100,000



# An Instructional Television Committee for PPTN

To explore this special area of programming need, a select committee of educators has been established. The individual committee members have identified in a preliminary survey two instructional television problems: school program funding and scheduling conflicts at the junior and senior high school level. The initial recommendations of the individual committee members suggest two solutions: (a) outside funding of school programming and (b) use of the inexpensive videotape recorder to eliminate schedule conflicts.

The committee will convene to study these preliminary findings and, in coordination with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, develop final recommendations for PPTN's future in the instructional area. Those who will serve on the committee include:

Mr. C. Daniel Biemesderfer  
Superintendent  
Ephrata Area School District  
Ephrata, Pennsylvania  
Dr. Clair Brown  
President  
Tri State Instructional  
Broadcasting Council  
Folsom, Pennsylvania  
Mr. John Christopher  
Director  
Bureau Instructional  
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Penn. Dept. of Education  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania  
Mr. D. Bruce Conner  
Executive Director  
Capital Area Intermediate  
Unit (15)  
Lemoyne, Pennsylvania  
Dr. Matthew Constanzo  
Superintendent  
Philadelphia School District  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Mr. Jacob Derrico  
Elementary Principal  
Whitehall-Coplay Schools  
Whitehall, Pennsylvania  
Mr. Jack Fiorini  
Teacher  
Sullivan County High School  
LaPorte, Pennsylvania  
(Chairman, WVIA-TV  
Curriculum Committee)  
Mrs. Sara Harvey  
Review Specialist  
Pittsburgh Public Schools  
(Chairman, WQED School  
Curriculum  
Advisory Committee)

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Mr. Louis Pollock  
President  
Morris Coupling and Clamp  
Erie, Pennsylvania  
Dr. John Sandel  
Superintendent  
Millcreek Township Schools

Mr. William Schaffer  
Superintendent  
Westmont Hilltop School District  
(Vice President, Allegheny  
Educational Broadcasting  
Council)  
Johnstown, Pennsylvania  
Dr. Gilmore B. Seavers  
President  
Shippensburg State College  
Shippensburg, Pennsylvania  
Dr. Rebecca W. Stewart  
Assistant Superintendent  
Division of Instruction  
Bethlehem School District  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania  
Mr. Marvin Wachman  
President  
Temple University  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Mr. Walter C. Wood  
Superintendent  
Wilkes-Barre School District  
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

# The Challenge

The Pennsylvania Public Television Network has completed Phase One — the creation of a network for Pennsylvania.

It is now time for Pennsylvania to utilize the system as it was designed to be used. This ascertainment survey emphatically indicates that the people want and need daily programming services from this state public television system.

Clearly it is impossible to meet every need, but the PPTN Commission reaffirmed its long range committee's belief that it can satisfy the greatest majority of these needs with an increase of only three hours per week of state-wide programming.

The local stations will continue to broaden their local basis of support and provide their local communities with relevant programming. The Pennsylvania Public Television Network has experimented in a way that has demonstrated the exciting possibilities of network programming and the technical and creative capabilities available.

We must now begin to provide the citizens of this state with a full service of relevant and meaningful programming.

**Pennsylvania Public Television  
Network Commission  
Policy and Planning Committee**

**Committee members:**

**Dr. John O. Hershey, Hershey —  
Chairman**

**Eugene M. Dougherty, McAdoo**

**Lee J. Gray, Haverford**

**Joseph D. Hughes, Esq., Pittsburgh  
Lloyd Kaiser, Pittsburgh**

**Ex-officio:**

**Philip I. Berman, Allentown**

**Warren A. Kraetzer, Philadelphia**

**David L. Phillips, University Park**

**David H. Leonard, Hershey**

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Harrisburg**

**Appointee of the Secretary of  
Education:**

**Mr. John Christopher  
Harrisburg**

**Pennsylvania Public Television  
Network Stations**

**WHYY-TV/Philadelphia**

**WITF-TV/Hershey**

**WLVT-TV/Allentown/Bethlehem**

**WPSX-TV/University Park**

**WQED-TV/Pittsburgh**

**WQLN-TV/Erie**

**WVIA-TV/Scranton/Wilkes-Barre**



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